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# TOWN OF BARRINGTON CARMELITE MONASTERY

**25 Watson Ave**  
SITE & BUILDING RE-USE ASSESMENT  
January 21, 2022



 **SignalWorks**  
Architecture

11 ALEPPO STREET  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND



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### New Reports Provided

**Interview Contacts**

**Structural Engineer Letter Draft** - January 19, 2022

**Landscape Architect Letter** - January 10, 2022

### Prior Reports Referenced

**Building Condition Assessment Report** - July 27, 2021

**Environmental Site Assessment** - July 27, 2021

**Limited Asbestos Survey** - July 27, 2021

**Limited Subsurface Investigation** - August 2021

**Original 1956 Architectural Drawings** - May 1956

**1990 Renovation Architectural Drawings** - August 3, 1990

**Minutes from Barrington Town Financial Meeting** June 16, 2021



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Approach

This report captures the Initial Redevelopment Feasibility of the Site, and the Building Re-use feasibility.

First the general site zoning, site and soil condition and utility availability is reviewed, identifying which elements would need to be investigated further for specific redevelopment options.

Then the suitability of the existing building for re-use is reviewed, identify elements that would need to be replaced or improved as part of an adaptive re-use project.

It does not analyze the site for specific re-use options, nor is it a comprehensive element-by-element survey of existing building conditions. Rather this is a general overview that can be used to assess the suitability of the site, and its existing building for re-use.

### Methodology

For this Report, we have relied upon the following information sources:

- Site Visit by Architect, Structural Engineer & Landscape Architect 12/17/2021
- Building Reports, including Environmental, Soil, Building Assessment, Structural & Survey
- Local Research, including GIS and local utility contacts
- Review of Existing Conditions Drawings
- Overall summary of impact of existing reports & on-site observation

### General Description

The site is 7.285 acres, currently zoned R-40. The site is roughly 40% cleared, housing the primary monastery with parking lot plus main public access on east side of site along with outbuilding cottage and 2 minor sheds located on the property.

There are stands of mature trees providing buffer on sites north and west sides, and to a lesser degree the southwest corner, where the site slopes down dramatically. Overall the site is dry, siting outside of major flood plains, with access to town water & sewer, as well as natural gas and electric service.

The building itself is a 29,500 sf, 3-story monastery building, with a single story chapel built into grade with first floor access on its East side towards the parking lot / Watson Street, and a walk-out ground floor to the South and West. The building was constructed in 1956, with its primary structure being brick on CMU block, with prestressed concrete floor slabs. It underwent a minor renovation in 1990. Original drawings are available.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Summary of Findings

#### Site

Changes in zoning will be the greatest driver to how the site is redeveloped. The site offers robust natural resources – from desirable view corridors and local waterfront access to dry soils suitable for development. Its topography—which helps create its desirable views -- may moderately limit some development, but may also provide reason for preserving wooded areas.

The site is well served by local utilities – water, sewer, gas and electric – and provides opportunity for integrating renewable energy.

Current Zoning may allow 9 to 15 units (with between 25% to 50% affordable), using current zoning incentives and Planning Board approval processes. Should the zone be changed to R-25, that number rises to 25 units, and if it is designated a Senior Residential Village Districts, up to 58 units may be allowed. (All of these options will require Planning Board approval; some require Town Council Approval to change the Zoning Map.) Additional density would require unique zoning relief, the acquisition of which would likely borne upon the developer, unless zoning changes are made.

#### Existing Building

The building condition is functional, with some existing systems having upgrades, and may be feasible to be continued to be used as a monastery if a long term Capital Expenditures Improvement plan was provided. Adaptive re-use of the building will require full scale renovation of most building systems; largely only the structure of the building would be re-used as-is.

This is not uncommon to post-industrial rehabilitations (ie, mill conversion) or conversion of former school buildings, both of which are common to this area. This structure also includes the added challenge of working with load bearing CMU block walls not found in those precedents, and modifying the pre-stressed structural slabs is not recommended. For example, upgrades for improved elevator access would likely need to occur as an addition, rather than within the footprint of the building. Additionally, selective demolition of portions of the building (ie to save the chapel and related spaces), would prove to be challenging, given the building's structure.

Elements assumed to be replaced for residential adaptive re-use:

- All windows replaced, some requiring lintel work
- Some exterior brick repointing
- Roof membrane and associated elements to be replaced
- All Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing & Life Safety systems would be provided new for the proposed use
- Some utility service may be adequate, depending on type of re-use (likely water, sewer, gas) others new service would be anticipated (ie, electrical).
- Interior fully reconfigured, requiring removal CMU block walls, work with load-bearing CMU walls
- Stair railings & enclosures upgrade to meet code
- Reconfigured parking lots to allow barrier free access & accessibly, and new elevator provided by addition



Satellite Image: GIS



PHOTO: Lila Delman Real Estate

Aerial Image





## SITE REDEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS

### Zoning

The site is currently zoned R-40 allowing single family zoning on 40,000sf lots, with other dimensional restrictions. The town, who has purchased this property, is undergoing a re-use study regarding the site, and may make changes to its Comprehensive Plan and change the zoning of the site prior to issuing a Request for Proposals for prospective developers.

Because of these factors, **current zoning is a point of reference**, but would not be a determining factor in site re-use. The following discussion identifies the current zoning regulatory environment, including higher density developments types whose requirements & approval procedures are already codified in the zoning ordinance. Using current R-40 zoning, using existing approval procedures, it could be expected this site would yield between 9 units (with 2 affordable) and 15 units (with 8 affordable). If the site was rezoned to R-25, the site could yield between 15 units (with 3 affordable) to 25 units (with 13 affordable). Should the same zoning that the Zion Bible Institute has be applied to this site, it would yield 43 to 58 units (with 11 to 15 affordable).

It should be noted that when the town voted to acquire this property at the June 16, 2021 Barrington Financial Town Meeting, it was **required that the existing building be “Preserved”** as part of the approved resolution, which passed 176-175. Notably there is no guidance or further definition of “Preserved” beyond the language of the resolution, other than President Carrol’s statement “we do not plan to tear the building down. We would like to preserve and renovate the structure” as captured in the meeting minutes.

As a potential development parcel, it is highly likely that a developer for this site would propose a subdivision or other form of development that requires planning board review, utilizing existing higher density approval procedures, or petitioning for alternate relief.

Regardless of development, under the town’s Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning developments of **three or more residential units include 20% affordable housing**. A **subdivision**, whether minor (5 or fewer lots) or major (6 or more lots), would create three or more residential units, and thus be subject to the town’s Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Requirements, which state that 20% of all units meet “Affordable Housing” requirements (120% AMI for sale; 80% AMI for rental). This ordinance provides a 20% density bonus, so that minimum lot size in an R-40 zone would become 32,000, which calculates out to 9 residential lots by right. If rezoned to R-25, 15 lots of 20,000sf would be feasible. Subdivisions would be reviewed by the Planning Board as part of the Land Development process (no Town Council approval required).

Barrington Zoning currently allows for three higher density development types that would be relevant to this site: **Residential Single Family Cluster Development, Senior Residential Communities & Senior Residential Village Districts**. These would require Planning Board and ultimately Town Council approval. It should be noted should a development providing affordable housing be denied by the Town, the applicant could appeal to the State Housing Appeals Board, and the denial would likely be overturned because of the town does not meet the state’s 10% affordable housing requirement. Something similar recently occurred with a 30 unit development on a 3 acre parcel on Georgia Avenue.



**Residential Cluster Developments** give a 10% density bonus for preserving 20% of the lot area as open space, along with modified dimensional requirements. These require 10 acre minimum in R-40 zones, or 7 acres minimum in R-25 zones. If this site was permitted as a cluster development 11 units would be expected in a R-40 zone or 17 in an R-25, based on its 317,320sf of area. This is considered a change to the zoning district, and is reviewed by Planning Board and enacted by Town Council.

**Senior Residential Communities** incentivize cottage style housing, and provide density bonuses, and are allowed via Special Use permit in R-40 and R-25 zones. Special Use permits are considered an allowed use and are generally granted, as long as the applicant meets the listed additional approval requirements (ie, this is not considered relief or a variance from current zoning). These allow for 1 unit per 20,000sf in R-40 districts (ie, 15 units) & 1 per 12,5000 in R-25 districts (25 units). This development type require 50% Affordable housing, along with other requirements and need review by the Planning Board under the Land Development Process, and a Special Use permit from the Zoning Board for Review (no Town Council approval required).

**Senior Residential Village Districts** is a zoning district that allow for 6 to 8 units per acre, and require 25% Affordable housing, along with other requirements. This would calculate to 43 to 58 units. (Currently this only applies to the former Zion Bible Institute Site.) This would be reviewed by the Planning Board & rezoning the site as an “SRV” zone by the Town Council would be required.

	R-40 Zone	R-25 Zone
<b>Subdivision</b>	9 units (2 affordable)	15 units (3 affordable)
<b>Residential Cluster</b>	11 units (3 affordable)	17 units (4 affordable)
<b>Senior Community</b>	15 units (8 affordable)	25 units (13 affordable)
<b>Senior Village District</b>	43 to 58 units (11 to 15 affordable)	

**Town of Barrington Ordinances**

**Chapter 185 Zoning Code:**

Special use Permits: [Article XIV](#)

Single Family Cluster Residential Districts: [Article XX](#)

Development Plan Review: [Article XXIV](#)

Low- and Moderate-Income Housing: Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning Requirements: [Article XXVII](#)

Senior Residential Communities: [Article XXX](#)

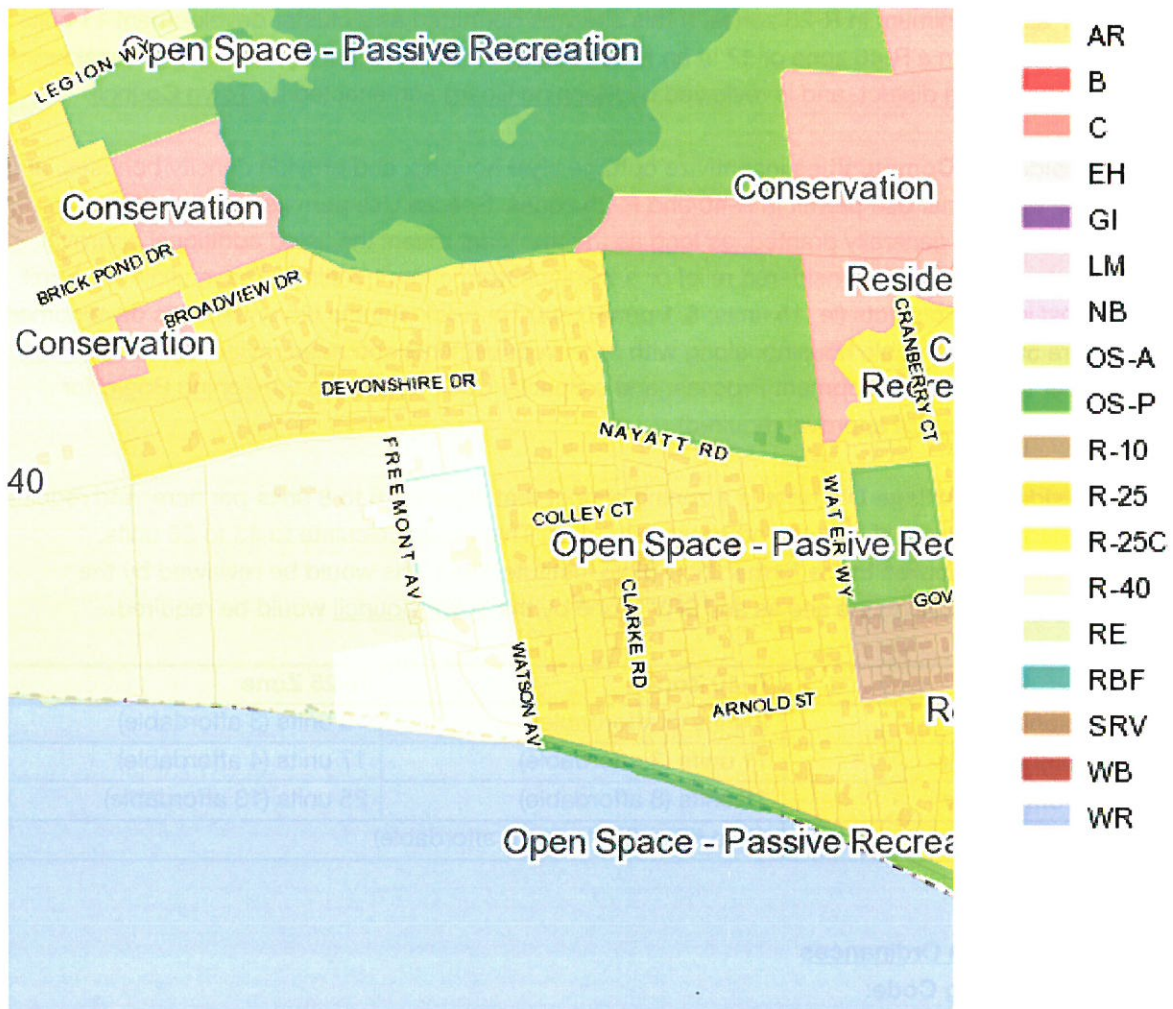
Senior Residential Village District: [Article XXXI](#)

**Chapter 200 Land Development & Subdivision Regulations:**

Minor Land Development or Subdivision: [Article VI](#)

Minor Land Development or Subdivision: [Article VII](#)





Zoning: GIS

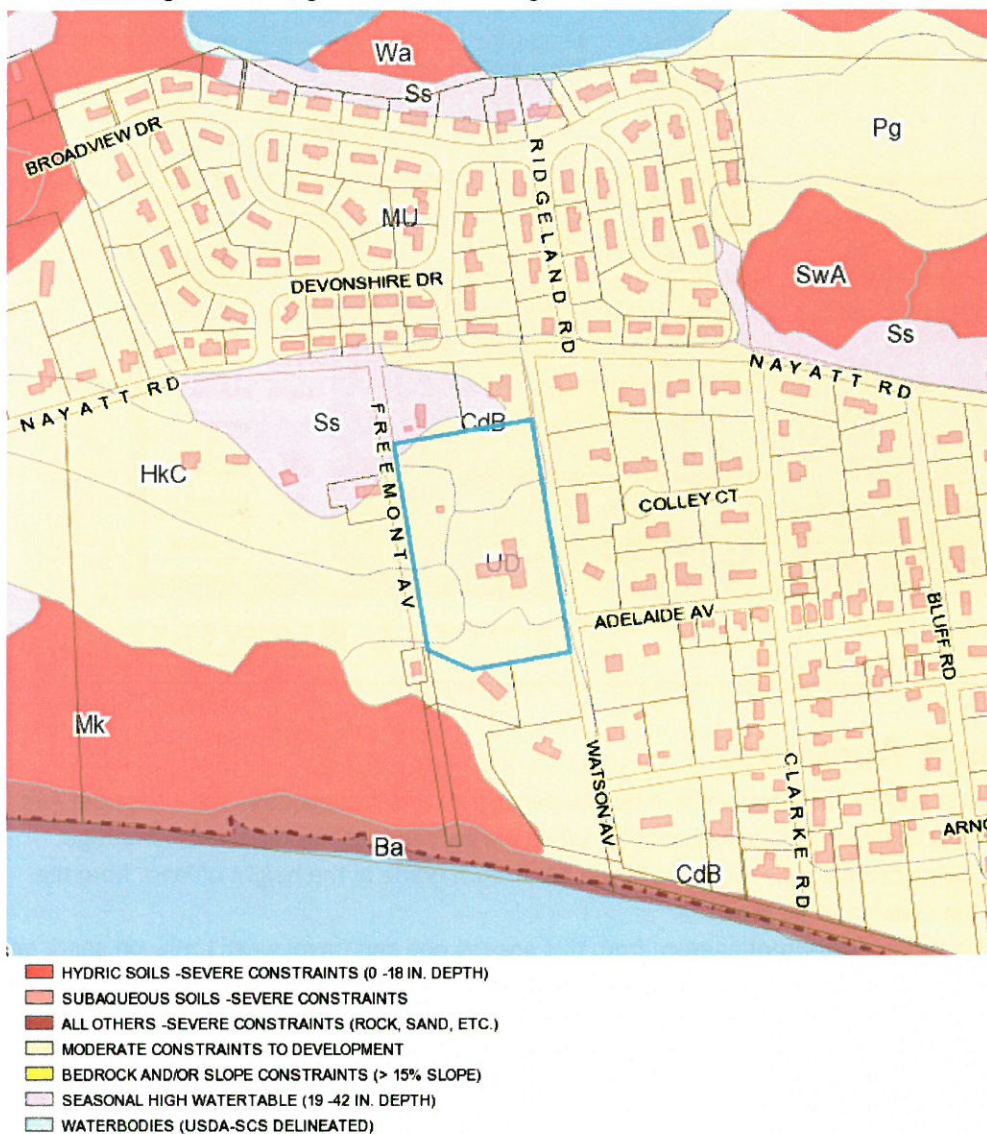


## SITE REDEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS

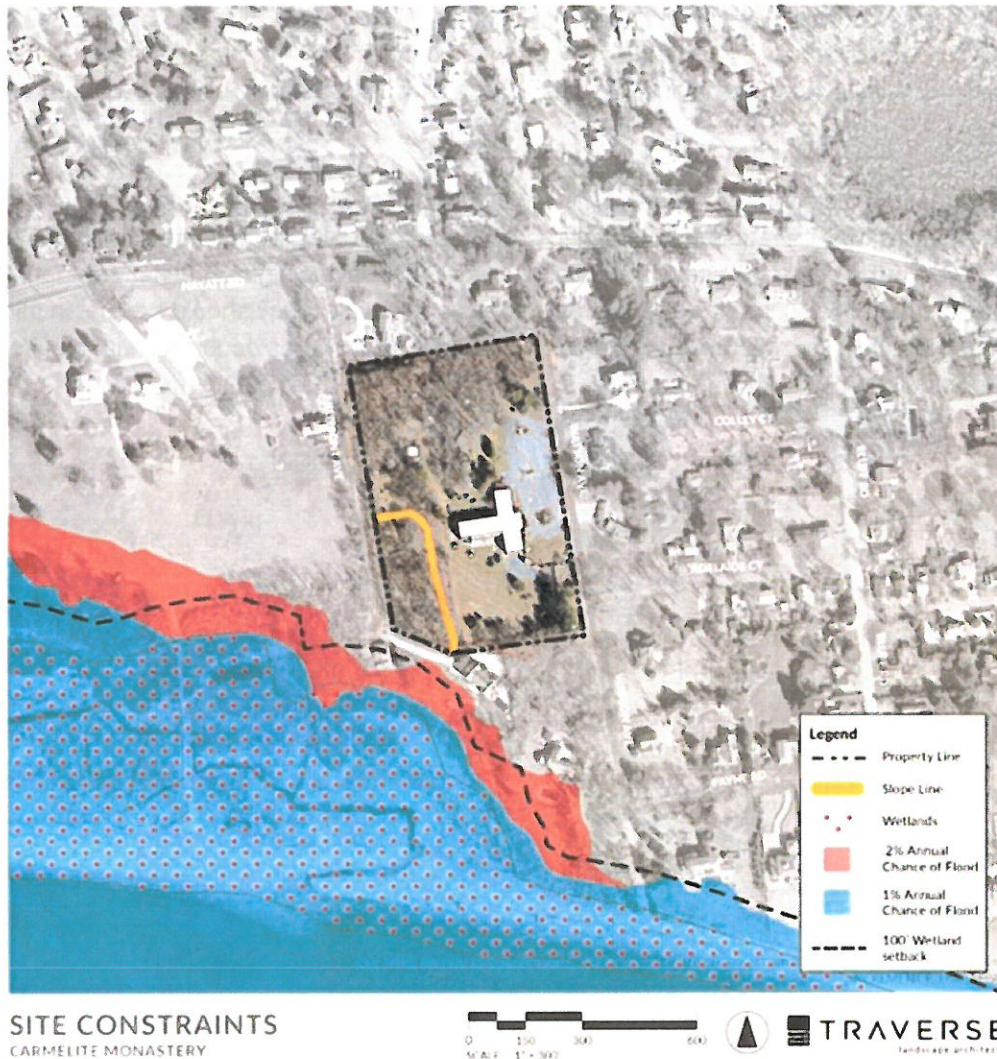
### Topology & Soil Types

The site is dry (no wetlands), and sits outside of 100 year flood plain. The existing monastery is at height of land, with minor slopes in the North and Westerly direction, with substantive slope on South West portion of site.

GIS data indicates that the sites soil types are UD having moderate constraints to development. Geotechnical analysis may be required for specific proposed structures, but initial review shows general suitability. To the North East of the site GIS data shows soils that have a high seasonal watertable; this does not extend substantially onto the site, but awareness of this adjacency should be kept in mind. Additionally, soil test boring undertaken to rule out environmental concerns occurred, with results not recommending additional ground water testing.







Flood Zones

## Adjacencies & Access

The site fronts Watson Ave on the East where it has its parking lot and main access and Freemont Ave on the West, which has a gated, non-paved access. While the parcel does not have water frontage, current clearing provides dramatic views to the South West from grade at the height of land, from the building, and from the clearing to its south.

Watson Ave provides public waterfront access; from this access one can travel west 1 mile on sand, and east to the Town Beach (and beyond) on walkable sand surfaces.

Additionally, across Freemont Ave sits the 76 acre Tillinghast Farm—owned and managed by the Rhode Island School of Design-- which provides open greenspace and natural environments. This property and the site's existing wooded areas provide a woodland – wildlife travel zone.





**Circulation Diagram**  
CARMELITE MONASTERY

0 150 300 600  
SCALE: 1" = 300'

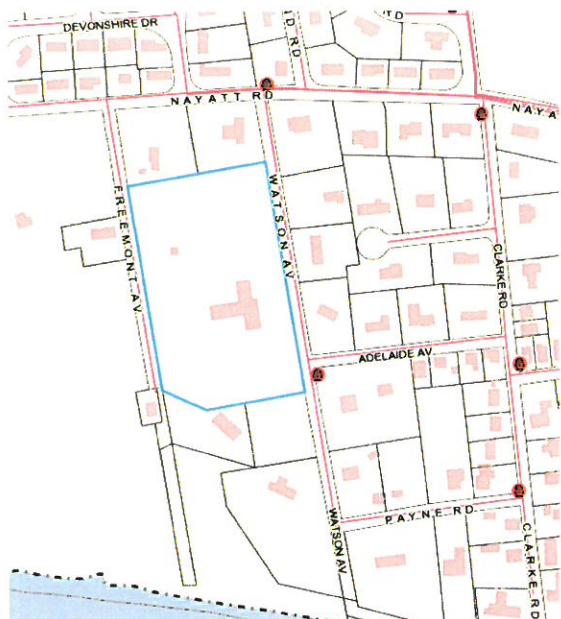




**TRAVERGE**  
landscape architects

## Utilities

The site is served by existing Town Water & Sewer and has an existing artesian well on the property. Town water serves local fire hydrants. There is natural gas and pole-mounted electric service currently run to the building. Utilities service the site from both Freemont & Watson Ave (other than natural gas, which is from Watson only). Some development options may require further analysis of existing infrastructure capacity. The natural slope and clearing of the property make it a suitable location to incorporate solar panels in a redevelopment.





 HYDRANT  
 WATER MAIN



 Sewer Manhole  
 Sewer Access Manhole  
 Sewer Drop Manhole  
 Sewer Lateral  
 Sewer Line  
 Sewer Force Main  
 Sewer Flow Direction  
 Sewer Pump Station



Gas: ESRI